magistrates are concerned, and practically Division Assistants also. As regards Tahsildars and Peishkars, the subject requires careful consideration. We shall watch what may be done elsewhere and see whether our finances will admit of the necessary expenditure being incurred on this account even if this were feasible or expedient.

25. Dilatoriness in the disposal of revenue petitions.

Mr. K. Padmanabhan Tampi (Taluk Association, Kalkulam) represented that it took 3 or 4 years for a Revenue officer to dispose of a petition and even cases in which final orders had been passed did not receive attention. He requested that a rule might be laid down prescribing the period within which revenue petitions should be disposed of by the authorities concerned.

Reply—The representation seems to be well-founded to some extent and a great deal could be done in the matter. You know how things are being dealt with now. Any one conversant with the transaction of business in the Huzur Cutcherry must know what spirit should pervade the Divisional and other subordinate offices in receiving petitions either in or outside the office room, in hearing the wants of the people, in speedily disposing of them and in immediately giving endorsements. Whatever defects exist ought to be and are being removed and I have no doubt that other officers are imbibing this spirit and following it up in practice. Instructions are being daily issued and all unnecessary delays noticed. You may rest assured that in this important matter there will be appreciable improvement with which, I hope, you will have reason to be satisfied when we meet here again.

26. Discontinuance of the practice of clerks taking depositions in revenue cases and avoidance of inordinate delay in the disposal of these cases.

Mr. R. Narayana Pillai (Ettumanur) said that in escheat and other cases clerks took down the depositions of parties and the Tahsildars merely signed them, on the ground that they had Devaswom work to attend to. In the Judicial department, judges and munsiffs took down depositions in their own hand and the speedy disposal of cases was insisted on. The member suggested that a rule might be laid down specifying the period within which revenue cases should be disposed of by Tahsildars and all statements written up by themselves, and that as a relief to the Tahsildars the Devaswom work might be ordered to be looked after by the Deputy Tahsildars.

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Reply.—In regard to depositions, it is inevitable that in certain cases clerks will have to be left to take them down, though this should be allowed only when unavoidable and it is desirable to minimise the number of such cases as far as possible. Even in judicial cases the presiding officer can at times authorize clerks to do this work for him. Instructions will however issue to secure correctness and remove irregularities.

As regards the disposal of revenue cases, in addition to what has been said already, I may add that returns are being called for from the officers concerned to see how long each matter has been pending with them and notice is being taken of inordinate delays. It is hoped that such supervision will tend to reduce the evil complained of.

27. Demand notices to be served through Provertikars and their charge made payable with reference to the person and not to the number of pattahs.

Mr. Kanakku Mathevan Mathevan (Nedumangad) stated that the present practice of sending demand notices direct from the taluk gave rise to large sums being paid by ryots living in the distant parts of the taluk as fees, even though the actual tax in arrears was in many cases comparatively small. He suggested that if the notices were caused to be served through Provertikars the loss would be equal to all. Further, demand notice fees were now calculated and made payable with reference to each pattah on which payment became due and not with reference to the person who held a number of them together and who was solely responsible for the payment of fees to Government. The member requested that the latter course as being the more convenient to the ryots might be adopted.

Reply.—As regards the agency for serving demand notices, it is provided by section 46 of the Revenue Recovery Regulation (I of 1068) and para 2 of the rules framed under it which relates to this matter is in keeping with it. This question came up before Government in another connection and it was found that the present procedure could not be modified. The distance is calculated not from the Provertikar's office but from the Taluk Cutcherry from which the notice issues. This is the practice in British India also.

In regard to the second point, the practice of treating the pattah as the unit seems to be the best one. There will be many difficulties in taking the person as the unit in such cases.

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